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TAGS: [OSCE](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: OSCE: STATEMENT ON RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S CALL FOR
PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NORTH
CAUCASUS REGION

¶1. Post is authorized to present the following statement at
the January 28 Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.

Begin text:

Thank you, Mister Chairman.

The United States and other delegations have repeatedly
voiced concern here in the Permanent Council over the past
year regarding the increased incidences of violence in
Russia's North Caucasus region targeted against journalists,
human rights defenders, government officials, and citizens.

We agree with the European Union's statement today regarding
the treatment of individuals in Russian police custody, which
has recently led to abuses such as violence or neglect. We,
too, welcome initial steps taken to investigate these crimes,
and we urge that any criminal misconduct revealed by these
investigations be fully and transparently prosecuted. Doing
so, as the EU has noted, would further reflect Russia's
dedication to fully implementing OSCE commitments.

In that regard we note Russian Federation Prime Minister
Putin's call on January 24 for the protection of human rights
organizations in the North Caucasus, following a long period
of violence against and dangers confronting human rights
activists in this troubled region. We hope his expectation
that regional and local authorities will work with law
enforcement agencies to ensure the proper operation and
functioning of human rights organizations and the safety of
human rights defenders is a new sign of the government's
determination to turn the deteriorating situation around and
to take steps to end the apparent air of impunity that now
prevails.

It is time for those guilty of violence and murder to be
brought to justice. We support the Government of Russia, in
keeping with Prime Minister Putin's statement, in its efforts
to ensure that Russian civil society organizations will be
able to fully participate without unnecessary hindrance in
contributing solutions to societal challenges and in
advancing rule of law.

The United States welcomes this statement by the Russian
Prime Minister as an acknowledgment by Russia of the
importance of its OSCE commitments on fundamental freedoms
and human rights, the protection of which will contribute to
both internal and external security in a very volatile
region. It remains our hope that these words will soon be
matched by results which will demonstrate the faithful
implementation of OSCE commitments.

END TEXT
CLINTON